

Committee on Resources

resources.committee@mail.house.gov

[Home](#) [Press Gallery](#) [Subcommittees](#) [Issues](#) [Legislation](#) [Hearing Archives](#)

U.S. Senator Dianne Feinstein

Testimony Before Subcommittee on Water and Power

of House Resources Committee on

California Ecosystem, Water Supply and Water Quality Enhancement Act of 2003

July 24, 2003

First, I want to thank Representatives Calvert and Napolitano for giving me the opportunity to testify on CALFED today. And to all my fellow members of the California delegation, I've enjoyed working with you on water issues, and we are going to need to work together even more closely over the next year.

I want to speak plainly to you all -- California needs a CALFED bill, and we need it now. If we don't act now, we are not going to have enough water to meet California's needs in a decade or two. It's as simple as that. The last time we increased our water infrastructure was the 1960's. Our population then was 16 million, less than half of the 36 million we have now. And less than one-third of the 50 million we will have soon.

We need to increase our water supply for our economy as well. California is the largest agriculture state in the nation, and we're the sixth largest economy in the world. We need water to run this economy. We all know how difficult it is to pass a CALFED bill. I want to share with you my perspectives on why I think that my bill, S. 1097, is a bill that we could pass.

First, it is a balanced bill. California has many different water needs and interest groups that advocate for them. We need ecological restoration for our environment; we need recycling and desalination, water quality and conveyance for our cities, and we need storage, both groundwater and surface, for our farms. A CALFED bill that is going to pass must evenhandedly provide for all these interests, so Californians can rally around it.

The bill I have introduced explicitly requires balanced implementation. Some Republican Senators were afraid that environmental projects not needing authorization would sail smoothly ahead, while storage projects lacking Congressional approval would languish. To meet this

concern, the bill includes a provision requiring the Secretary of the Interior to annually certify that the CALFED program is progressing in a balanced manner among all of its components. If it is found to be out of balance, the Secretary must revise the schedule.

Second, my bill respects that CALFED has a history, and respects the past agreements that Californians have made. It is worth remembering the drought of 1990-1991, when Californians were fighting desperately over scarce water. We figured there had to be a better way. So Secretary Babbitt came out to California, and we negotiated the Bay-Delta Accords in 1994. We essentially called a timeout, while we tried to figure out a plan to work together.

- more -

Senator Feinstein, CALFED Statement Page 2

Out of the Bay-Delta Accords we negotiated the Record of Decision, culminating in 2000. The Record of Decision is CALFED's road map. The Record of Decision set forth commitments to attend to the water interests of all Californians, urbans, farmers, and environmentalists. The commitments in the Record of Decision are the framework that holds us together through the inevitable water conflicts. I know that not everyone celebrates every detail in the Record of Decision. So my bill adopts the Record of Decision as a framework for CALFED's program components. This is compromise language, negotiated at great length, and we need to keep its recognition that the Record of Decision is our roadmap.

Finally, we need to keep a good handle on the federal funding of the many different agencies involved in CALFED. My bill meets this concern by requiring the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) to prepare a cross-cut budget showing the federal funding of each of the different agencies. The bill also sets forth a specific list of the projects to be funded and how much each one would receive.

Let me briefly tell you the elements of my bill. It is an \$880 million authorization over 4 years. The federal cost-share is limited to one-third. There is \$102 million for planning and feasibility studies for water storage projects - and an additional \$77 million for conveyance.

I don't believe we can meet all of our future water needs without increased water storage that is environmentally benign, that is off stream and that provides flexibility in the system for us to increase water supply, improve water quality, and enhance ecosystem restoration. We absolutely need to take water in wet years and store it for the dry years that follow.

- Next, there is \$100 million for ecological restoration. This means improving fish passages,

restoring streams, rivers and habitats and improving water quality.

- The bill authorizes \$153 million for water conservation and recycling, including \$84 million for desalination and water recycling projects, leveraging substantial additional water supplies for California with relatively little federal investment.
- The bill would also improve water quality for drinking through investment in treatment technology demonstration projects and water quality improvements in the San Francisco Bay Delta, the San Joaquin Valley, and other parts of the State.
- The bill also includes a grants program for local and regional communities throughout California, including the northern part of the State. The bill authorizes up to \$95 million for local California communities to develop plans and projects to improve their water situation.
- The bill also includes \$50 million for watershed planning and assistance.
- The bill also includes other important provisions on levee stability, with \$70 million, ensuring CALFED has strong supporting science, with \$50 million, and \$25 million for program management, oversight, and coordination.
- Finally, there is \$75 million for the environmental water account, which purchases available water for environmental and other purposes.

I look forward to working with you to all to pass CALFED as quickly as possible. We absolutely need this legislation for California's future.

###